

## **Nutritional Standards**

### **Introduction**

Meals shall meet the nutritional standards as prescribed in this section. A child care facility shall provide adequate and nutritious meals prepared in a safe and sanitary manner.

Healthful diets help children grow, develop, and perform well in learning environments. Healthful diets contain the amounts of essential nutrients and calories needed to prevent nutritional deficiencies and excesses. They provide the right balance of carbohydrate, fat, and protein to reduce risks of chronic diseases, and are part of a full and productive lifestyle. Such diets are obtained from a variety of foods.

Nutrition and feeding practices for children strongly affect the development and long-term health of the child.

Proper nutritional care during the early years is essential for intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Children must be given a diet that is adequate, but not excessive in water, calories, and all essential nutrients. It is also necessary that an environment is provided which encourages the development of good food habits.

### **THE GOALS OF A CHILD CARE FACILITY IN RELATION TO NUTRITION SHOULD BE:**

1. To help meet the nutritional needs of each infant and child;
2. To provide food with consideration for the child's cultural patterns, food practices, and socialization needs;
3. To encourage the development of healthful food habits; and
4. To provide wholesome food served in a safe, clean, and pleasant environment and in a pleasant and supportive fashion.

### **FEEDING SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN ONE YEAR AND OLDER**

CHILDREN'S FOOD NEEDS ARE BASED ON THE AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN THE CHILD CARE FACILITY.

ANY CHILD IN A CHILD CARE FACILITY AT THE TIME OF SERVICE OF A MEAL OR SNACK WILL BE SERVED THAT MEAL OR SNACK.

<b>Length of stay</b>	<b>Number of snacks</b>	<b>Number of meals</b>
2-5 hours	1	Meals are required only if child is in the child care facility at time of meal service.
5-8 hours	1-2	1
8-10 hours	2	2
12-24 hours	All snacks and meals served when in the child care facility.	All snacks and meals served when in the child care facility.

**Child care facilities that are open 24 hours are required to serve three (3) meals and three (3) snacks.**

## **I. Meal Time**

Meals and snacks shall be served at regularly scheduled times each day.

The same meal or snack shall not be served more than one time in any 24 hour (one day) period.

No more than four (4) and no less than a two and one-half (2½) hour period must elapse between the beginning of a meal and a snack.

A mid-morning snack or breakfast shall be provided to each child.

Since not all children arrive at the facility at the same time, certain parental options regarding breakfast will be allowed as follows.

1. Parent can feed the child prior to arrival at the child care facility.
2. The parent may have the meal provided by the child care facility.

Either option must be documented and included in the child's record.

If desired, by their own operating policy, a child care facility may restrict bringing of food into the child care facility.

## **II. Meal Time Environment**

Age appropriate utensils and dining area shall be provided.

Children shall not wait longer than fifteen minutes at the table for food to be served.

Sufficient time shall be allowed for children to wash their hands and prepare for the meal.

Meal time shall be used for socialization, and shall be a relaxed, happy time for the children.

A caregiver shall join the children while they are eating.

Food shall not be used as a reward or punishment.

Children shall be encouraged to eat but not forced to eat.

Additional servings shall be provided for the child who requests more food at a meal or snack.

### III. **Menus**

A (2) two week cycle of menu plans shall be submitted annually as part of the renewal process.

Daily menus for all meals and snacks prepared and/or served in the child care facility shall be plainly posted. Any substitution shall be of comparable food value and shall be recorded on the menu and dated.

Menus shall be written at least one week in advance.

Menus shall be posted in the food preparation area.

Menus shall be planned to include food with variety in texture, color, and shape.

Record of dated menus served shall be kept on file for a minimum of one (1) year.

New food shall be introduced to help develop good food habits. Introduce only one new food per meal or snack.

### IV. **Child Requiring a Special Diet**

A child requiring a special diet due to medical reasons, allergic reactions, or religious beliefs, shall be provided meals and snacks in accordance with the child's needs and the written instructions of the child's parent or a licensed physician. Such instructions shall list any dietary restrictions/requirements and shall be signed and dated by the child's parent or physician requesting the special diet. The child care facility may request the parent to supplement food served by the child care facility. When food is supplied by the parent, the child care facility shall be responsible for assuring that it is properly stored and served to the child in accordance with the diet instructions on file at the child care facility. Records of food intake shall be maintained when indicated by the child's physician.

### V. **Food Preparation**

A file of recipes shall be used to prepare the food.

Foods shall be prepared in a form that is easy for children to handle. Bite size pieces and finger foods are suitable.

Foods shall be prepared as close to serving time as possible to preserve nutrients, flavor, and color.

Food should not be highly seasoned. Children need to learn the flavors of food.

Raw vegetables shall not be served to children under two (2) years of age.

## VI. **Choking Prevention**

A caregiver shall join the children while they are eating. This is an opportunity to teach socialization skills, nutrition education, and is a safety measure to help prevent choking.

Children should be taught to sit quietly at snack and mealtimes, to eat slowly, take small bites, and chew well before swallowing.

### **FOODS WHICH MAY CAUSE CHOKING**

Sausage shaped meats (hot dogs)	Pop Corn
Hard Candy	Chips
Nuts	Pretzels
Grapes	Chunks of peanut butter
Gum	Marshmallows
Raisins	Dried Fruits

### **To Reduce Choking Hazards**

Cook food until soft and cut hot dogs into short strips, not round slices. Serve other foods in thin slices or small pieces. Remove bones from meat, chicken, and fish, and also remove seeds and pits from fruit.

## VII. **Feeding of Infants**

Breast milk is the recommended feeding for infants and should be encouraged and supported by child care facility staff. The mother may choose to come to the child care facility to nurse her infant, or may choose to supply bottles of expressed breast milk for the child care facility staff to feed the infant.

A written schedule for feeding the infant shall be provided by the parent and posted for reference by the child care facility staff.

Formula or breast milk shall be brought to the child care facility daily, ready to be warmed and fed. Each bottle shall be labeled with the infant's name and the date.

Bottles should be warmed for (5) five minutes in a pan of hot, not boiling water; **never** microwave. Before feeding, test the temperature by squirting a couple of drops on the back of your hand.

At the end of each feeding, discard any milk left in the bottle.

Baby foods shall be brought in unopened jars and labeled with the infant's name.

Infants shall be held cradled in the arms during feeding. At no time shall an infant be fed by propping a bottle.

Introduction of solid foods to an infant should be done according to the schedule of the Mississippi State Department of Health Infant Feeding Guide.

Solid foods must be spoon-fed. No solid foods shall be fed by bottle or infant feeder without written direction from a physician.

## **MENU PLANNING**

Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide assistance in planning meals for ages (2) two and older, which will promote health and prevent disease.

The guidelines, applied to child care feeding are:

1. Offer a variety of foods;
2. Serve meals and snacks that help maintain a healthy weight;
3. Serve plenty of vegetable, fruits, and grain products;
4. Avoid excessive fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol;
5. Use and serve sugar only in moderation;
6. Use and serve salt and sodium only in moderation; and
7. Promote an alcohol and drug free lifestyle.

## MEAL PATTERNS FOR CHILDREN IN CHILD CARE FACILITIES

One, all, or any combination of breakfast, lunch, supper, and supplements between meals (snacks) may be served at child care facilities depending upon the age child and the hours of operation. A pattern for each meal is given that will show how total nutrients needs for the day can be met.

PATTERN	CHILDREN 1 to 2 years	CHILDREN 3 to 5 years	CHILDREN 6 to 12 years
<b>Breakfast</b>			
1. Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
2. Fruit or 100% fruit or vegetable juice	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
3. Bread or Bread Alternate including cereal, cold dry or cereal, hot cooked	½ slice ¼ cup or ⅓ ounce ¼ cup	½ slice ⅓ cup or ½ ounce ¼ cup	1 slice ¾ cup or 1 ounce ½ cup

Snack (Supplement)				
Select 2 out of the 4 components				
1.	Milk, fluid	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
2.	Juice or Fruit or Vegetable	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
3.	Meat or Meat Alternate	½ ounce	½ ounce	1 ounce
4..	Bread or Bread Alternate including cereal, cold dry or hot cooked	½ slice ¼ cup or ⅓ ounce ¼ cup	½ slice ⅓ cup or ½ ounce ¼ cup	1 slice ¾ cup or 1 ounce ½ cup
<b>Lunch or Supper</b>				
1.	Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
2.	Meat or Poultry or Fish, or egg, or cheese, or cooked dry beans or peas, or peanut butter	1 ounce 1 1 ounce ¼ cup 2 tbsp	1 ½ oz. 1 1 ½ oz. ⅜ cup 3 tbsp.	2 ounces 1 2 ounces ½ cup 4 tbsp
3.	Vegetables and/or fruits <b>Must include at least 2 different vegetables</b>	¼ cup <b>2 servings of at least 1 fruit or 1 vegetable</b>	½ cup <b>2 servings of at least 1 fruit and 1 vegetable</b>	¾ cup
4.	Bread or Bread Alternate	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice

<sup>1</sup>Cooked, lean meat without bone.



## Meal Pattern Points To Remember

Keep in mind the following points when you plan menus to meet meal pattern requirements for each of the food groups.

### Meat and Meat Alternates

- \* For menu variety, use meat and cheese in combination (1 ounce of meat and ½ ounce of cheese).
- \* Dried beans or peas (Remember: does not count for both vegetable and meat alternate in the same meal).
- \* When serving nuts and seeds, they may fulfill:
  - (a) full requirement for the snack but;
  - (b) no more than one-half of the requirement for lunch or supper.

### Fruits and Vegetables

- \* Use only 100-percent-strength juice for breakfast. Juice drinks with at least 50-percent-strength juice may be used for snack and lunch. (Caution: children must be served double the volume of these drinks to meet the requirement).
- \* Fruit-flavored drinks, ades, or punches contain less than 50-percent-strength juice. These types of beverages may be served but are not credited toward meeting the requirement.
- \* Juice should not be served as part of the snack when milk is the only other component. It is poor menu planning to offer such a combination since it provides too much liquid for children.
- \* Juice or syrup from canned fruit does not count as fruit juice.
- \* Use a different combination of two or more servings for lunch. Include various forms such as raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, canned in juices, or dried.
- \* Avoid serving two forms of the same fruit or vegetable in the same meal. Example: an orange and orange juice or an apple and applesauce are combinations that should not be used.  
**Serve a variety of vegetables and fruits to ensure a nutritionally well-balanced meal.**
- \* Small amounts (less than ⅛ cup) of onions, relish, catsup, salsa, jams, jellies, or other condiments may be added for flavor or garnish as "other foods," but do not count as a fruit or vegetable.

**Bread and  
Bread Alternates**

\* Use whole-grain or enriched breads and bread alternatives, or whole-grain, enriched, or fortified cereals. Read labels on commercial products to guide you.

\* Foods such as cake and pie crust, and items usually served as desserts, cannot be used as bread alternates. Crust used as part of the main dish (i.e., for pizza or quiche) is allowed as a bread alternate.

\* The bread requirement cannot be met with snack foods such as popcorn, hard pretzels, chips, or other low-moisture items made from grain.

\* Cookies cannot be used for the bread requirement at breakfast, lunch, or supper.

\* Doughnuts cannot be served to meet the bread requirement at lunch or supper.

**Milk**

\* Milk shall be served at Breakfast, Lunch and Supper. Milk may also be served as part of a snack. The milk shall be pasteurized fluid milk, fortified with vitamin A and D. Low fat should not be served to children under two years of age.

## SERVE A VITAMIN C FOOD DAILY

### Vitamin C:

#### Fruits

Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Cantaloupe  
Grapefruit juice  
Honeydew melon  
Kiwi fruit  
Mangoes  
Tangelos  
Orange juice

Papaya  
Pineapple juice (Vitamin C added)  
Grapefruit  
Grapefruit and orange sections  
Mandarin orange sections  
Raspberries  
Strawberries  
Oranges

#### Vegetables

Artichokes  
Peppers  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Cauliflower  
Chicory  
Collards  
Escarole  
Kale  
Kohlrabi  
Mustard greens  
Okra

Asparagus  
Plantain  
Potatoes  
Pumpkin  
Snowpeas  
Spinach  
Endive  
Tomatoes  
Tomato juice  
Turnip greens  
Turnips

## SERVE A VITAMIN A FOOD EVERY OTHER DAY

### Vitamin A:

#### Fruits

Apricots  
Cantaloupe  
Mango  
Plums  
Cherries (red sour)  
Peaches

Tangerine  
Mandarin orange sections  
Nectarines  
Watermelon  
Prunes  
Papaya

#### Vegetables

Broccoli  
Carrots  
Chard  
Spinach  
Squash, winter  
Sweet potatoes  
Tomatoes  
Tomato-vegetable juice  
Peppers, sweet, red  
Mixed vegetables

Plantain  
Pumpkin  
Collards  
Endive  
Escarole  
Kale  
Mustard greens  
Peas and Carrots  
Turnip greens

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## REFERENCES

1. United States Department of Agriculture; Food and Consumer Service; Child and Adult Care Food Program: Nutrition Guidance for Child Care Centers. Alexandria, VA; 1995.
2. US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Health and Human Services; "Nutrition and Your Health: Dietary Guidelines for Americans". Washington, DC; 1995.
3. WIC Program, Mississippi State Department of Health; Infant Feeding Guide, Jackson, MS; 1995.

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